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Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 AID-20 IGA-02 MC-02 DODE-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EB-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00

COME-00 /074 R

$RAFTED BY NEA/AFN:DLMACK:EW
APPROVED BY NEA/AFN:MWWILEY
PM/SAS:RSMITH (INFO)
NEA/RA-COL. MUNDY (INFO)
---------- 022703
R 251703Z JUN 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS, TS
SUBJECT: FY 74 FMS CREDIT FOR TUNISIA

REF: TUNIS 3588, 3213 AND 3106

1. TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR HEDDA CALLED ON WILEY (NEA/AFN) TO DISCUSS WHAT HE TERMED "MISUNDERSTANDING" REGARDING THE REJECTION BY THE TUNISIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF THE FMS CREDIT FOR FY 1974. HEDDA SAID THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH KHEFACHA ON THE PHONE BUT HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY WRITTEN REPORT FROM HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. HEDDA STATED THAT MISUNDERSTANDING ORIGINATED WITH MAY 21 MEETING WHEN EMBASSY TUNIS CHARGE PRESENTED COPY OF FMS CREDIT AGREEMENT TO KHEFACHA. ALLEGEDLY, DUE TO LATE-NESS IN FISCAL YEAR, KHEFACHA BELIEVED THAT CREDIT AGREE-MENT WAS FOR FY 1975. TIS BELIEF STRENGTHENED BY FACT THAT CHARGE REITERATED AMBASSADOR'S EARLIER CAUTIONARY NOTE THAT GOT SHOULD CONSIDER BUDGETING FOR CONTINGENCY THAT
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THERE WOULD BE NO MILITARY GRANT IN FY 1975. WHEN KHEFACHA

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VIEWED CREDIT IN CONTEXT OF NO GRANT, HE CONCLUDED THAT TERMS WERE TOO STRICT.

3. HEDDA ALSO STATED HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH SPEED WITH WHICH CREDIT WAS REALLOCATED AND FACT THAT DEPARTMENT DID NOT SEEK FROM HIM CONFIRMATION OF GOT REFUSAL. HEDDA EVIDENTLY BELIEVES HE COULD HAVE QUICKLY STRAIGHTENED OUT MISUNDERSTANDING.

4. HEDDA SOUGHT REASSURANCE THAT WE DID NOT INTERPRET SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AS HAVING ANY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, POINT HE SAYS THAT GOT UNDERSTANDS. WHEN WILEY ASSURED HIM THAT WE VIEW MATTER AS REGRETTABLE MISUNDERSTANDING, HEDDA SAID THAT ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO RECOVER CREDIT. WILEY SAID THIS WAS PROVING VERY DIFFICULT, BUT WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS. ALL AVAILABLE CREDITS WERE PRESENTLY PROMISED TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND THERE WOULD BE COMPETITION FOR ANY LAST MINUTE FALLOUT FUNDS.

5. COMMENT: HEDDA'S INTERPRETATION APPEARS TO BE RATIONALIZATION TO COVER MISTAKE OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND, IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID IT WAS NOT BASED ON ANY WRITTEN INSTRUCTION TO HIM FROM GOT. NONETHELESS, WE SEE NO POINT IN DEBATING ORIGIN OF MISUNDERSTANDING AND AGREE WITH HEDDA THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN ANY POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. SISCO

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